United Nations A/73/69–E/2018/47

General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
23 February 2018

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-third session
Item 27 of the preliminary list*
Agriculture development, food security and nutrition

Economic and Social Council
2018 session
27 July 2017–26 July 2018
Agenda item 11
Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

Main decisions and policy recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit a report on the main decisions and policy recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security.**

* A/73/50.
** The report is being issued without formal editing.

18-02861 (E) 280218

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Report on the main decisions and policy recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Introduction

1. This report responds to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) decision 2011/217, in which the Council invited the Chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) to transmit to ECOSOC every year a report on the main decisions, policy recommendations, and the results achieved by the Committee in the area of food security and nutrition, in accordance with its roles and vision. More information regarding the roles and vision of the Committee can be found in documents A/66-76-E/2011/102 and A/65/73/-E/2010/51. The report describes the main outcomes and decisions taken by the Forty-fourth Session of CFS held in October 2017 and, where relevant, provides updates on follow-up action. The Final Report of the Session is available at http://www.fao.org/3/a-mv030e.pdf. The Forty-fifth Session of CFS will take place on 15–20 October 2018.

Main decisions, recommendations and results

Sustainable Forestry for Food Security and Nutrition

2. The CFS High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) presented in 2017 a report on *Sustainable Forestry for Food Security and Nutrition*. The evidence-based report was used as the basis for a policy discussion that led to the elaboration of policy recommendations that were endorsed by the CFS plenary and are provided in annex to this report, as well as in the Final Report of the Forty-fourth Session of CFS.

3. Forests play an important role for food security and nutrition (FSN) by contributing to dietary quality and diversity, serving as a safety net in times of scarcity, shocks and crises, generating income for local people and providing essential ecosystem services; however deforestation driven by land use conversion for agriculture has adverse impacts on the environment, local communities and indigenous peoples. Sustainable agriculture, food security and improved nutrition cannot be achieved at the expense of and without forests. Better coordination of land use policies is needed to promote sustainable agriculture that benefits from healthy, sustainable and productive forest and tree ecosystems.

4. In this context, and in complementarity with the recently adopted United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030, the recommendations aim to strengthen the contribution of sustainable management of forests and trees to the achievement of food security and nutrition and to contribute to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food, in the overall context of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Recognizing the essential role of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), and the role of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), they call for gender-sensitive implementation which addresses the specific needs of indigenous peoples, local communities and smallholders.

5. CFS endorsed policies and actions that, in summary:

- Acknowledge the importance of, raise awareness on, and encourage strengthening of the role of forests and trees to the four dimensions of FSN;
- Develop and use policy-relevant knowledge and data on the direct and indirect contributions of forests and trees to FSN;
- Develop, implement and monitor policies for integrated agriculture and forest management for improved and sustainable FSN;
- Promote the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT).

6. The Committee encourages all stakeholders to disseminate the recommendations at the local, national and global levels, make use of and support their application when formulating strategies, policies and programmes, as appropriate, and encouraged these policy recommendations to be forwarded to relevant policy bodies including the Committee on Agriculture (COAG), the Committee on Forestry (COFO), the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF), the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

CFS and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

7. The Committee discussed findings from the 2017 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World Report and expressed concern about the increase in the number of chronically undernourished people in the world, up from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016. This, together with rising rates of overweight and obesity, threatens the world's ability to achieve SDG2 and related targets by 2030. The Committee called on all stakeholders to accelerate efforts to address the root causes (conflict, climate change and protracted crises being among the most prominent) of such devastation, and to contribute to the recovery and resilience of societies, particularly by strengthening sustainable food systems. In this respect, governments and all stakeholders are encouraged to use and apply CFS policy products, and in particular the CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS-FFA).

8. Six countries[1] among the 43 Voluntary National Reviews in HLPF 2017 presented at CFS their national experiences towards the SDGs related to food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture. Encouraging steps are taken to reform policies, improve the overall sustainability of food systems and ensure national food security and nutrition through diverse, holistic approaches. However, important challenges remain, such as addressing simultaneously all forms of malnutrition; supporting small-scale food producers to overcome poverty and adopt more productive and sustainable practices; improving the overall economic, social and environmental sustainability of food systems; and addressing regional and/or rural-urban inequalities and the lack of rural infrastructure. Common lessons learned stressed the importance of political leadership, multistakeholder processes and effective partnerships, the importance of disaggregated data and monitoring, and capacity building. The Committee renewed its call to all countries to apply integrated policy frameworks such as the CFS products to achieve the SDGs.

[1] These countries were: Azerbaijan, Belgium, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Italy and Sweden.

9. The Committee noted the 2017 HLPF Ministerial Declaration which reiterates the crucial role that sustainable food systems can play in eradicating poverty and hunger. It endorsed its contribution to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2018 review "Transformation towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies", pending its update with the outcomes of CFS 44 discussions.

CFS and Nutrition

10. The CFS HLPE launched its independent, evidence-based report on Nutrition and Food Systems. The findings and recommendations of the report were discussed.

11. FAO and WHO jointly presented the Committee with a progress report on follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), including implementation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition. The Committee welcomed the announcement of the first SMART commitments and the launch of action networks, and encouraged all stakeholders to step up efforts, in accordance with the Nutrition Decade Work Programme.

12. The Committee discussed good practices and lessons learned on investments for healthy food systems through the presentation of case-studies. These stressed the importance of aligning policies and investments aimed at healthy food systems across sectors through strong political commitment and participation of all value chain actors and of women in particular, who play a central role in food systems.

13. The Committee considered the outcome of intersessional discussions and activities and agreed on CFS' contribution to the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition. As part of such contribution, it decided to start substantive discussions in 2018–2019 to develop terms of reference for submission to Plenary in CFS 45 for a policy convergence process leading to voluntary guidelines for food systems and nutrition, informed by the HLPE Report on Nutrition and Food Systems and other activities. The objective of the work in 2018 is to clarify the objective, scope and purpose of the policy convergence work, identify the main thematic areas, in line with CFS mandate and added value, with clear indications on the expected results, primary users and modalities of dissemination in the context of the Nutrition Decade Work Programme.

Outcomes of the Forum on Women's Empowerment in the Context of Food security and Nutrition

14. A Forum on Women's Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition took place shortly before CFS 44 to discuss the challenges that remain in realizing women's empowerment and to promote a shared understanding of the need to achieve gender equality and the full realization of women's rights in the context of food security and nutrition. The Plenary took note of its outcomes[2] and particularly drew attention to the need for governments to translate their commitments into national policies, programmes, investments and adequate human and financial resources; called on all to work towards the implementation of UN General Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), especially its General Recommendation 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women; and emphasized the importance of mainstreaming gender equality, women's and girls' rights and women's empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition in all CFS work streams, products and documents.

[2] Available here: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/bodies/CFS_44/MU756_7/MU756_CFS_2017_44_7_en.pdf.

Urbanization, Rural Transformation and Implications for Food Security and Nutrition

15. The Committee was presented with a compilation of experiences and effective policy approaches on "Addressing food security and nutrition in the context of changing rural-urban dynamics" aimed to support a discussion leading to possible future policy convergence and coordination work. Areas were identified as requiring further attention and exploratory work will continue in the intersessional period through the organization of two intersessional events, to support a decision in CFS 45 on future policy work on food security and nutrition within the context of changing rural-urban dynamics.

Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF) — Periodic Update

16. The Committee welcomed the finalization of the periodic update of the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition — 2017 Edition, as well as the creation of the online GSF as a functional, user-friendly tool.

17. The Committee encouraged all CFS stakeholders to undertake actions at the national, regional and global levels that would facilitate the dissemination and promote the use of the GSF.

Monitoring the Effectiveness of CFS

18. The Committee agreed on an approach to monitor the implementation of its main policy products and other policy recommendations. Global thematic events on CFS will take place in CFS Plenary every two years to monitor main policy products; events will be held on an ad-hoc basis to monitor other CFS policy recommendations according to their relevance to the global agenda and resource availability.

Response to the independent evaluation of CFS

19. The Committee was presented with the findings of the independent evaluation of CFS, released in May 2017, and endorsed a consultation report with the response to part of the recommendations of the CFS evaluation in October 2017 at CFS 44. The Committee requested the Bureau, after consultation with the advisory group and in an open, participative and inclusive process, to finalise the response to the evaluation and submit it to CFS 45 for endorsement, and to implement the response to all recommendations which do not require plenary endorsement and report to CFS 45.

20. The Committee further issued guidance for the Bureau's consideration in its task to implement the response to the evaluation. It stressed the need to: ensure links between CFS work and the broader political agenda and synergy with complementary initiatives; adopt a longer-term and more strategic approach based on expected results; ensure a comprehensive planning phase for selecting future work; lay emphasis on awareness of CFS products at country level through the commitment of all stakeholders; ensure a transparent selection of HLPE team members; revisit the composition of the Advisory Group as needed for it to fulfil its role, remaining open to all relevant actors with the parameters set by the CFS Reform document.

Critical and Emerging Issues for Food Security and Nutrition

21. The Committee was presented with the second HLPE note on Critical and Emerging Issues for Food Security and Nutrition, released in April 2017.

Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) for 2018–2019

22. The Committee adopted its Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) for the biennium 2018–2019.

23. The work of CFS over 2018–2019 will focus on:

- Finalising a Plan of Action and implementing the responses to the CFS independent evaluation
- Developing policy guidance on Nutrition and Food Systems. To this effect, terms of reference will be presented to CFS 45, outlining the scope, nature of the policy instrument, and inclusive process to develop it
- Assess the feasibility of policy convergence work to support countries address food security and nutrition in a context of changing rural urban dynamics
- Supporting country-led implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and global progress review
- Monitoring the use and application of CFS policy recommendations through Global Thematic Events. These will focus on: the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security (CFS 45, 2018) and preparations for an event on the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS 47, 2020)

24. The Committee commissioned two reports from the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) to be released in the next biennium:

- A report on *Multistakeholder Partnerships to Finance and Improve Food Security and Nutrition in the Framework of the 2030 Agenda* will be launched in 2018.

25. This report will examine the innovative potential that multistakeholder partnerships offer to increase the effectiveness of development finance, access to resources, technology transfer, and capacity building in the context of the 2030 Agenda. It will draw lessons from the variety of multi-sectoral partnerships that are (or have been) operational in connection to food security and nutrition.

- A report on *Agroecological approaches and other innovations for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition* will be presented in 2019.

Report of the Forty-fourth Session of the Committee on World Food Security (Rome, 9–13 October 2017)

26. The full Final Report of the Forty-fourth Session of the Committee on World Food Security, which was held at FAO Headquarters in Rome, from 9 to 13 October 2017, can be found at the following link: http://www.fao.org/3/a-mv030e.pdf

27. The Report includes Appendix A — Agenda of the Session; Appendix B — Membership of the Committee; Appendix C — List of Documents.

Annex. CFS Policy Recommendations

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

1. Forests and trees,[3] in their diversity of ecosystems and human perceptions and uses, contribute directly and indirectly to food security and nutrition (FSN) in numerous ways and at different levels. These contributions vary according to types of forests and the way they are managed. Forest foods contribute to dietary quality and diversity and serve as safety nets in periods of food scarcity to those directly depending on forests for their livelihoods. They also play a role as coping mechanisms in terms of shock and crises. Wild foods from forests provide nutritious food and diversity to diets to millions of rural women, men and children. Woodfuel is a primary source of energy for cooking and sterilizing water for one in three households globally. Forests generate income for local people and provide essential ecosystem services that are essential for sustainable agriculture by regulating water flows, stabilizing soils, maintaining soil fertility, regulating the climate and providing habitat for wild pollinators and predators of agricultural pests.

2. However, land use conversion for agriculture driven by increased demand and land degradation remains the main cause of global deforestation, accounting for 70–80 percent[4] of total forest loss and with adverse impacts on the environment and millions of indigenous peoples and local communities and smallholders. Sustainable agriculture, food security and improved nutrition cannot be achieved at the expense of and without forests. Better coordination of land use policies is needed to promote sustainable agriculture that benefits from healthy, sustainable and productive forest and tree ecosystems.

3. The following recommendations have been elaborated building upon the main findings of the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of CFS (HLPE) report on Sustainable Forestry for Food Security and Nutrition. They aim to strengthen the contributions of sustainable management of forests and trees to the achievement of food security and nutrition and contribute to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security in the overall context of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, recognizing the essential role of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), and the role of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The recommendations complement the recently adopted United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030 and build upon the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), as applicable.

4. In addition and within this context, gender responsive implementation of the recommendations is important and thus the promotion of gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, respecting their rights, and access to forest and land tenure, agriculture and forestry support services, capacity building, and fostering women's equal participation in decision making is essential to achieving food security and nutrition and should be mainstreamed across all policy recommendations.

[3] The category trees outside forests gathers a diversity of agriculture systems with very divergent scales and impact on FSN.

[4] State of the World's Forests, SOFO. FAO, 2016. HLPE report on Sustainable Forestry for Food Security and Nutrition, 2017.

5. These recommendations are particularly important to address the needs of indigenous peoples and local communities and smallholders especially forest-dependent people who have a spiritual, cultural, social, political and economic relationship with forests. These include forest hunters, gatherers and workers. They are part of the group of smallholders who contribute significantly to global food production.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are primarily addressed to governments for public policies, but are also addressed to all stakeholders with a role in achieving food security and nutrition. The recommendations are voluntary and non-binding and aim to complement and not restate related guidance previously provided in other CFS policy products and recommendations.

I. ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPORTANCE OF, RAISE AWARENESS ON, AND ENCOURAGE STRENGTHENING OF THE ROLE OF FORESTS AND TREES TO THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF FSN[5]

a) Recognize the need to strengthen the contribution of forests and trees, within landscape mosaics, in the provision of fundamental ecosystem services to support agricultural production and restore land productivity;

b) Recognize and respect appropriate traditional practices and the key contribution of indigenous peoples and local communities and smallholders when managing sustainably and in an integrated manner land, forests and trees while achieving FSN;

c) Recognize the vital role of forestry for livelihoods and sustainable development around the world.

II. DEVELOP AND USE POLICY-RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE AND DATA ON THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS OF FORESTS AND TREES TO FSN

a) Take measures to inform and train FSN policy makers and practitioners about the importance of sustainable forest and trees management for FSN using participatory methodologies to generate knowledge about the contributions of forests and trees to FSN, at different spatial and temporal scales recognizing indigenous peoples and local communities and smallholders as holders of traditional knowledge;

b) Build the necessary capacities, and provide professional training and organizational changes needed for participatory research, better data collection and extension services;

c) Design metrics and collect data that are disaggregated by gender, age, and other social parameters;

d) Improve trans-sectorial, systemic data collection in FSN and forestry monitoring systems, on the use of wild foods (animals, plants, mushrooms) and forest products, including for nutritional content, dietary quality and diversity, poverty alleviation, health and medicinal purposes, as well as harvest impacts;

[5] The four dimensions of food security are: access, availability, utilization and stability.

e) Perform more research on the contribution of Neglected and Underutilized Species (NUS) to FSN and on relations between trees and agricultural productions in agroforestry systems, as well as knowledge on insufficiently explored diversity of forest genetic resources likely to meet human FSN needs.

III. DEVELOP, IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR POLICIES FOR INTEGRATED AGRICULTURE AND FOREST MANAGEMENT FOR IMPROVED AND SUSTAINABLE FSN

States to:

a) Promote an integrated approach including the nexus among forestry, agriculture, water and FSN to strengthen policy coherence across sectors and at different scales, by reinforcing cross-sectoral coordination through a participatory and inclusive process;

b) Provide the institutional and financial requirements and policy support to integrate resilience-enhancing dimensions of forests and trees into agricultural and food security and nutrition policies and programs;

c) Respect, protect and fulfill the rights of women in the forestry and agricultural sectors and tackle gender disparities which negatively impact FSN;

d) Develop and promote participatory forest and trees policies and management planning and measures that enhance access to nutritionally important forest food products for indigenous peoples and local communities and smallholders;

e) Promote forest conservation, regeneration of native forests and restoration of degraded forests, where appropriate, as well as the development of agroforestry systems;

f) Provide incentives for the provision of forest-based ecosystem services that benefit sustainable agriculture and FSN.

All stakeholders to:

g) Increase investment in research to establish, promote and upscale good practices in agriculture, forestry and agroforestry systems within integrated landscape mosaics;

h) Promote integrated planning and local adaptive management of landscapes, including community systems, acknowledging the multiple functions and uses of forests and trees that contribute to enhance resilience of landscapes, communities and livelihoods;

i) Promote a nutrition-sensitive approach to integrate the multiple goals of FSN, sustainable forest management, land use, and biodiversity conservation;

j) Encourage appropriate technical support, extension services and training to stakeholders, particularly vulnerable groups;

k) Increase the coherence between agricultural productivity and forest conservation to lessen the pressure put on forests;

l) Mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment throughout forestry institutions, policy and programmes to promote women's leadership and access to and control over forest resources and income opportunities for achieving FSN;

m) Promote and integrate low-carbon, renewable energy schemes for FSN in sustainable forest management plans including on a small scale supported by the indigenous peoples and local communities and smallholders to achieve multiple benefits such as adequate access to fuel for food preparation; and invest in social and technical innovations in particular to minimize health risks associated with the use of woodfuel;

n) Increase responsible public and private investments to support community-driven, forest-based enterprises for sustainable livelihoods.

IV. PROMOTE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON THE PROGRESSIVE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY AND THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON THE RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE OF TENURE OF LAND, FISHERIES, AND FORESTS IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY (VGGT)

a) Promote forests, trees and farmlands-related policies, legislation and programmes based on the VGGT, that respect and secure the legitimate tenure rights of indigenous peoples and local communities and smallholders and the Free, Prior and Informed Consent of indigenous peoples;

b) Collaboratively develop VGGT-based initiatives with indigenous peoples and local communities and smallholders to enhance the productivity and resilience of forests and tree-based systems, and incorporate these initiatives into policies, programmes and practices;

c) Facilitate access and sustainable use of forest and trees resources as well as access to markets [6] for indigenous peoples and local communities and smallholders for the progressive realization of their right to adequate food in the context of national food security, national laws and legitimate tenure and resource use rights;

d) Apply the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI) to all types and sizes of agricultural investments including fisheries, forests and livestock for enhancing food security and nutrition.

[6] In line with the CFS recommendations on Connecting Smallholders to Markets.